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AMERICAN ART NEWS

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NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

Owing to the disturbance caused by war conditions in the postal service, we cannot guarantee prompt delivery of this journal through the mails. For delays in such delivery, while they should be reported at once to this office, we cannot accept blame. The journal is mailed in the General New York Post Office early Friday evening of each week and should reach our N. Y. City and suburban subscribers by Saturday morning, and those at greater distances in proportionate time.

Charles Henry Dorr ceased his connection with the American Art News Co. last season, and is not authorized to represent this company in any capacity.

VICTORY ARCH PLAN

The Victory Arch will stand as planned on the wide space west of Madison Square and will form an entrance to Fifth Avenue northward, as the Washington Arch does in Washington Square further south.

Before any decision is made regarding the permanent memorial it has been agreed that a free and general expression of opinion should be made by all of the art societies of the city as well as other societies interested in the project. To give permanent memorial to so great an event as the victory is a serious matter.

The quadriga on top of the arch will be executed by Paul Bartlett, assisted by the Piccirilli brothers. The triumph of democracy will be the motif, and will be depicted by a chariot drawn by six horses, in a group with the crowning figure holding a flag. This group, according to Mr. Hastings, will be colossal in size. Four figures representing Peace and Justice, Power and Wisdom, executed by Herbert Adams and Daniel Adams, will be placed on either side, supported by the main column.

Allegorical figures will be modeled on the spandrels of the two main arches by Andrew O'Connor and Isidore Konti. Similarly allegorical figures will be executed on the minor spandrels of the side arches by C. A. Heber, F. M. L. Tonetti, Ulysses Ricci, and Philip Martiny. Bas-reliefs illustrating the battles of Chateau-Thierry, Ypres and the Marne and the services rendered by the Y. M. C. A., Knights of Columbus, Jewish Welfare Board, Salvation Army, and other organizations will be made by Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, Gutzon Borglum, John Flanagan, Hecan MacNeil, Chester Beach, Mahonri Young, H. Crenier, Charles Keck, Frederick Roth, Eli Harvey, H. M. Shady, G. Tosti, and Raphael Menconi.

The property, No. 1 W. 56 St., adjoining the Duveen building on the rear, and recently bought by Duveen Bros., was owned by Mrs. E. A. Abbey, widow of the artist.

PROBABLY NO ART TARIFF

As far as can be ascertained from the revised form of the revenue bill now before the Joint Conference Committee of the Senate and the House of Representatives, the 5% tax on art works sold, to which the Senate Finance Committee cut the 10% tax proposed by the House Committee, will be eliminated, so that the tariff will remain as before the war, and with this equitable tariff and its provisions the art world is familiar.

The tax of 10% on all frames valued at more than \$10 has been, however, regrettably left in the bill, and will cause more or less annoyance for some time to come.

The probable abolition of even the almost negligibly small tax of 5% on art works sold is a good thing, and the collection of such a tax would have presumably cost the Government almost as much as the revenue it would have produced.

The probable doing away with the art tax may be considered as a New Year's gift to the art trade.

PORTRAIT GALLERY PLANS

To correct certain curious and hasty published and reported misapprehensions as to the National Portrait Gallery Foundation of Mr. Christoffer Hannevig, it is only fair to state that Mr. Hannevig's donation of \$100,000 for the painting of portraits of 25 of the Americans who have formed the driving forces of America's efforts in the war, is intended only as a beginning of what it is hoped will be a much larger sum, to provide many other portraits of distinguished Americans.

Mr. Hannevig and his advisors are planning every safeguard possible against the lowering of the standard of the proposed National Gallery through the admission of poor and inartistic portraits and for the proper direction of the Gallery when organized. Those American portrait painters of proven ability whose names do not happen to figure in the list of the twelve native born artists which the Committee of Selection has decided upon, and ten of whom have now been named, will in all probability be named later on, so that there should be no jealousies aroused. The Committee of Selection has simply done its best, without fear or favor, to choose the twelve American born artists it considered best fitted to produce the first twelve of the 25 portraits for which the fund provides, as a nucleus for a large gallery, and while there may be individual differences of opinion as to the merits and abilities of artists, it would appear, in all fairness, that adverse criticism of the committee's selection should take into account the difficulties of such a choice, and all critics of the choice should try and prepare a better list, and, better, publish the same! It will be found, in our opinion, that pride of locality perhaps unconsciously affects the judgment of certain writers who have rather adversely criticised the idea of the gallery and the committee's selection as thus far made—let us say Boston, for example.

It should be remembered that the

National Portrait Gallery in London contains many mediocre and poor portraits which, while historically interesting in some cases, have little of art value. The American National Portrait Gallery will not, it is to be hoped, be marred in this way.

ART BOOK REVIEW

EARLY AMERICAN PORTRAITS. Collected by Mr. Thomas B. Clarke, American Art Association, N. Y.; \$5 net.

This handsome illustrated catalog with an introduction by Mr. Dana Carroll, prepared for the coming sale on Monday evening next, in the Plaza Ballroom, of 50 examples of early American Portraiture, assembled by the well known connoisseur and student, Mr. Thomas B. Clarke, of whom it may be truly said, to paraphrase, "He touches nothing (in the line of art), that he does not invest with interest and to which he does not give added value," is timely, in consideration of the recent and increasing interest in, and consequent rise in value, of the works of the early American painters. It is also a most important addition to the history and literature of the subject.

Following the recently issued brochure by the Ehrich Galleries entitled "100 Early American Paintings," it gives to the student and lover of the subject also, a work full of biographical information and instruction as to the lives, methods and technique of these early painters, and the two works should be in the library of every American art lover.

As Mr. Carroll truthfully says, in his introduction, "A collection of canvases of the character of that of Mr. Clarke has not before this been offered to the public. The growth of interest in America, in American paintings is not a new thing, but the development of interest in the earlier period of the Nation's art is a recent manifestation in national life that amounts to a renaissance. With the study of the art, there goes a revived interest in the personalities of the day. Early American portraits are now sought for with an avidity which, though it may be a tardy compliment to native achievement, is none the less a real one, and pregnant too, with present purpose and opportunity in art."

"The present collection," continues Mr. Carroll, "with the accompanying notes, proves that in earlier days there was a realization of the value of contemporary portraiture by resident men, which carries a lesson that the neglect of intervening years has, until lately, obscured."

When the "Renaissance" Began

The beginning of the revived interest in early American art, which Mr. Carroll well terms a "renaissance," was at the Charleston, S. C. Exposition of 1901-'02, of which the editor of the AMERICAN ART NEWS was the Art Director. Having become interested, during his student days at Princeton, through study of Charles Willson Peale's portrait of Washington, (the original of which still hangs in old Nassau Hall there), and other early American portraits owned by the College and some of the residents; he pursued the subject in the few books then obtainable, and through study of the examples of these older artists at the Pa. Academy, Phila., and in private homes in New Jersey, Philadelphia, Boston and on the James River, Va. With the knowledge in this way acquired that tidewater South Carolina, and notably, Charleston itself, should still have many early portraits, his first activity on arriving at Charleston itself, November, 1901, a month before the Exposition's opening, was to locate early pictures in the old houses of Charleston and the surrounding country. His search was quickly rewarded and he was surprised at the wealth and variety of the material found. For Charleston and the tidewater counties of South Carolina, like the James River shores in Virginia, had been originally settled by the younger sons of English families of wealth and cultivation, who brought with them, in many cases, their pictures, books, furniture and silver, while their tastes were transmitted to their descendants, many of whom therefore, not only crossed to England and France and while there, had their own and family's portraits painted, even by Reynolds, Lawrence, Romney and Gainsborough, but employed native artists, such as Gilbert Stuart, Copley, Allston, the Peales, Vanderlyn, Trumbull, Malbone and Fraser, and later Jarvis, Waldo, Jouett, Healy and others, but such foreigners as Theus and St. Memin, to present their likenesses. The Director found there a fine example of Romney, later sold for \$25,000 in London, and two Reynolds'.

Despite an opposition on the part of numerous owners to loan their pictures, from inherited prejudices against publicity and pride of private possession (even Charleston's then Mayor refused at first to let the City Hall, Trumbull, Vanderlyn and Healy go to the Art Gallery), even to their own Exposition—an opposition mostly overcome in a short time through social introductions, and it is hoped, the exercise of

judicious flattery and some tact—the Director finally succeeded in assembling the first, at all large representative and notable display of early American pictures ever made in America. There were no less than 10 examples of Gilbert Stuart, 12 of Copley, 39 of Sully, 3 of Washington Allston (a South Carolinian himself), and several each of Jouett, Inman, Neagle, Ingham, with some 50 miniatures by Malbone and numerous Frasers, Bonnetheaus Elliott, Jouett, Jarvis, Waldo, Blackburn, et al. These, well hung and placed in a handsome and well lit gallery, were even more a feature of the large Art Gallery itself, than was the large and comprehensive showing of modern American oils and watercolors in the adjoining rooms. In fact, the Charleston Art Gallery was pronounced by visitors the most interesting of its buildings.

Finding many of the old pictures in bad condition, the Director prevailed on some of their owners to have them cleaned and slightly restored, when necessary, and calling the attention of collectors and dealers who had heard from those of their fellows who had been able to visit the Exposition, of these early Americans, to their worth and value. They thus began to come on the market, and from 1902 on, the interest and value of early American pictures has steadily increased, until now comes the dispersal at auction of Mr. Clarke's fine array, the first auction of any size and scope of such canvases. Mr. Clarke himself became interested in the subject about the time of the Charleston Exposition, and as he studied, this interest grew. He persuaded the directors of the Brook Club, N. Y., to adorn their walls with fine examples of the early Americans, induced Mr. Cochran to assemble the superior collection of these works now in the Manor House at Yonkers, N. Y., and in every way fostered the collection of early Americans, giving his time and knowledge to their acquisition for his friends, as well as himself. In this work he was aided by the late Charles Henry Hart, and Messrs. Clarence J. Dearden, Charles X. Harris and others.

Some of the Collection

Some 35 painters figure in the present collection, the earliest born in 1688, and the latest of whom, (born in 1831) died only in 1915, so that the collection spans well over two centuries. The majority of the persons portrayed in Mr. Clarke's collection were personages, including Washington, Jackson and Grant, Webster, Clay, Stanton, Poe, Major Whistler "Peggy" O'Neill, etc. It is a collection important, both from the art and historical viewpoints, and its dispersal will be watched with keen interest.

Some idea of the rise in values of early Americans was given in the AMERICAN ART NEWS of Dec. 14 last, where it was stated that one of the 38 so-called Athenaeum type of bust portraits of Washington by Gilbert Stuart (another one of which figures in the Clarke collection), was recently sold for Mr. Charles L. Palmer of New London, Conn., by Messrs. August Franzen and Howard Young for \$40,000 to Mr. Carnil of Phila., while the late Willard Straight purchased a few years ago, one of the so-called Vaughan bust type portrait of Washington, also by Stuart, of which there are 8 examples, for \$25,000.

ART BOOK REVIEW

JOSEPH PENNELL'S LIBERTY LOAN POSTER. By J. Pennell. Philadelphia: J. B. Lipincott Co.

Those who have watched the development of the peculiar case of egotism with which Joseph Pennell is afflicted, will be amused over this book, rather imposingly made out of mighty slight material. The author's modesty is well expressed in his sub-title, to which statesmen will please pay special attention—this "amazing" sub-title quite in the vein of that very witty and very clever artist, who has proven a "good angel" to "faithful Joey" in more ways than one. Behold this delicious Whistlerian morsel—"A text-book for artists and amateurs, GOVERNMENTS and teachers and printers!"

In this text-book Mr. Pennell has told the story of the conception and execution of the poster which represents our good friend the Statue of Liberty rather the worse for the wear and tear of an imaginary bombardment. Mr. Pennell doesn't express in word or picture his imagination on the thrilling theme of the bombardment of London, a town in which he found it agreeable to live for years preceding those days when the operations of German Zeppelins and aeroplanes made tremulous the once firm earth at Chelsea-on-the-Thames.

Mr. Pennell's recital of squabbles with printers and the famous "Pictorial Committee" should prove highly illuminating to those governments for which this text-book is so magnanimously prepared, but one may be permitted to hope that the author's exhibition of nerve will not be taken as an example to be followed by each and every artist who designs a war poster. New art books are indeed scarce these days, but one shudders at the prospect of many of this character.

James Britton.